Ripley and Bond (Smiths. Misc. Coll'ns. 151(7): 1966) do not even give any such record from Socotra, although they quote single old records each of *P. collybita* and the Whitethroat, *Sylvia communis*, from Abd-el-Kuri, between Socotra and Cape Guardafui.

Among records of birds received by the Royal Society from J.A. Stevenson on Aldabra, copies of which were transmitted to me by D. Griffin, the following from West Island should be mentioned:

Eurystomus glaucurus, Broad-billed Roller: One seen at 15:00 hrs. on 20 October 1970. Benson and Penny (Phil. Trans. Roy. Soc. B260: 517, 1971) give but few records from Aldabra and neighbouring islands.

Oenanthe oenanthe, European Wheatear: One seen at 15:00 hrs. on Wed. 27 January 1971, with a note that there had been a cyclone the previous week. What was presumably the same individual was seen again on 1 and 5 February 1971. Benson and Penny (*op. cit.*: 519) suggest that this species may winter regularly on Aldabra in very small numbers.

HURRICANE LAURA, WITNESSED IN BRITISH HONDURAS

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Hurricane Laura was first reported on Sunday, November 14, 1971, in the morning. It was then a mere tropical storm near Swan Island, but in the afternoon it reached hurricane force and was baptized Laura. During the following days Laura first travelled N in the direction of Cuba, then turned W and finally S along the coast of the Yucatan Peninsula. It entered British Honduras territory in the early morning of November 20. By about mid-afternoon the hurricane had passed Belize, with wind speeds about 70 knots and thus not doing any harm. In Stann Creek though, things were slightly different. Belize and Stann Creek lay both on the western rim of the hurricane, but as it moved more and more southwesterly, the eye came closer to Stann Creek. Winds blew during the day first from the W, then NW, N, NE, and in the afternoon from the east. The eye was closest then. The winds came from the open sea and reached at least 80 knots. About half the harvest was lost in the extensive Citrus plantations east of Stann Creek, and wave action removed the longest wooden pier of the area.

On Glover's Reef, winds first came roughly from the W with speeds up to 70 knots. Wave action piled up large heaps of *Thalassia* and algae along the lagoon side of the cays without doing damage. The eye passed around noon, creating a two-hour lull. The most violent stroke came after this, with sudden wind forces of 80-100 knots from the NE; this lasted only a few minutes and calmed down to 70-80 knots shortly afterwards, but during this brief time some damage was done to the facilities of a diving resort on Long Cay. The winds sank a 35-foot vessel, blew down one of eight existing cottages, and removed half the tin roof of another hut. Very few coconut trees fell. Underwater, on the eastern and northeast fore-reef slope, broken trunks of *Acropora palmata* up to 20 cm in diameter could be observed here and there, as well as large colonies of *Acropora palmata* and *Diploria strigosa* turned upside down. However, only 2 m to the right or left of them, it was possible to find much younger colonies, very fragile and yet completely unharmed. Therefore, the character of the turbulence must have varied considerably within a space of a few meters.

In the evening, Hurricane Laura was in the Monkey River area and it dissolved and disappeared during the night south of Punta Gorda. Hurricane Laura was at least 100 miles in diameter, slow moving and of moderate force.

In its wake, Laura dragged along the windy, cool and rainy weather of a proper "Norther." The heavy rainfall during the night and during November 21 caused extended inundation in the flat coastal areas of British Honduras and made some of the most important roads impassable. A zone several hundred meters wide of brown muddy water along the British Honduras coast made the freshwater influx clearly visible, the major rivers causing extensive protrusions of this discoloration to almost half way across the barrier reef lagoon.

In conclusion, it can be stated that Hurricane Laura was an unusually late Hurricane, followed by an unusually early "Norther." Fortunately, the overall effects of both on British Honduras can be considered negligible.

PUBLICATIONS

REVIEWS:

Westoll, T.S. and Stoddart, D.R. (organizers), 1971. A discussion of the results of the Royal Society Expedition to Aldabra 1967-68, Philosophical Trans. Royal Soc. London, ser. B, 260 (836): 654 p. £19.00, $50.00. It is a curious fact that two of the most intensively studied atolls in the world were investigated for entirely different reasons. Bikini, in the Pacific, was investigated twenty-five years ago to evaluate the destructive power of atomic bombs. Now, Aldabra, in the Indian Ocean, is being given similar treatment in a laudable attempt to save it from the effects of encroaching civilization.

Aldabra, an atoll that rises from the deep sea, is the last undisturbed elevated reef island in the Indian Ocean. Its continued existence in this category was threatened in 1965 when the British Ministry of Defence announced a plan to construct a Royal Air Force Staging-Post there for planes flying to the Far East. In addition to a landing strip, the plan called for the construction of a harbor for tankers, a road, and a radio transmitting station. Realizing that such construction would probably have a devastating impact on the island and its unique fauna, the Royal Society, on behalf of scientific and conservation organizations, dispatched in 1967 a scientific expedition to study the island. In that same year the military plans were abandoned for financial reasons but the Society wisely continued its studies in the hope that the establishment of a scientific research station on the island would give protection to the area in the foreseeable future. The present volume presents Aldabra's case in a most impressive manner.

In September 1966 D.R. Stoddart and C.A. Wright had accompanied the survey party that went out to reconnoiter the island as a potential staging-post and radio station site. Stoddart was named a member of the Aldabra Research Committee set up by the Royal Society to work with personnel from the Smithsonian Institution, the U.S. National Academy of Sciences and the University of the Witwatersrand in a lengthy research program. Stoddart became the overall expedition leader and is the author, or co-author, of a number of the papers in the present volume. To date, more than forty persons have participated in the expeditions to Aldabra.

The biota of Aldabra is an interesting one that is intermediate between that found on sea level atolls and that of the high islands. It has many remarkable features. It supports, for example, an estimated total of 100,000 Giant Land Tortoises; it is the land base for several kinds of marine turtles; the largest colony of frigate birds in the Indian Ocean (30,000) breeds there. The island is the home of several distinct species and subspecies of land birds. One of these, a new warbler, was discovered during the present investigation; another is the rail, *Dryolimnas*. This is the last of the flightless birds of the western Indian Ocean but at least 1000 still survive on Aldabra.